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Patent
Gaymar 0-03-123

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventor:	Flick et al.	Title:	Stand Alone Integrated Cushion
Serial no.:	10/608,649	Examiner:	F. Conley
Filed:	June 27, 2003	Art Unit:	3673

Amendment and Response

Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir/Madam:

This response is in reply to the office action that was mailed on March 9, 2004. In the office action, the examiner rejected claims (a) 1-8 and 10 as being unpatentable over Newkirk et al. in view of Stacy et al., (b) 9 and 12-17 as being unpatentable over Newkirk et al. in view of Stacy et al. and Williams et al., and (c) 11 as being unpatentable over Newkirk et al. in view of Stacy et al. and Shafer et al. Each rejection is based on Newkirk et al. in view of Stacy et al. and applicant respectfully traverses.

Applicant has amended claim 11 to address an obvious typographical error. This amendment does not alter the scope and/or breadth of the present invention.

We direct the examiner's attention to claim 1, which reads as follows:

1. A stand alone integrated mattress comprising:
a self-contained mattress unit having at least a head section and a foot section, and capable of converting from a horizontal position or an inclined position to a chair-like conformation;
 at least one inflatable bladder in each section of the self-contained mattress unit;
 at least one fluid source;
at least one dispersion unit in each section and each dispersion unit provides a fluid, obtained from the fluid source, to a conduit which directs the fluid into the inflatable bladder positioned in the section of the dispersion unit;
a control system positioned in one of the sections and interconnected to each dispersion unit to control the dispersion of the fluid to the inflatable bladders in each section.

Emphasis added.

The examiner correctly wrote in the office action that Newkirk et al. "fails to disclose a dispersion unit in each section and a control system." The examiner, however, failed to identify

any reference (in particular Newkirk et al. and Stacy et al.) that discloses, suggest or teaches a self-contained mattress unit.

The term "self-contained mattress unit" means a support surface assembly (*a.k.a.*, mattress) having at least a dispersion unit, a control system, inflatable bladders, and conduits contained within the support surface assembly. If such components are a part or attached to a support frame, which could be used to support or position the self-contained mattress unit, or other devices then those components are not within a self-contained mattress unit, as claimed.

That definition is supported by the specification (see page 1, lines 28 to 30 – "The control unit 220 can be outside the mattress system 200 (not shown) or within the mattress system 200, as illustrated in Figure 1." – when describing the prior art), figures and the cited references.

Stacy et al. admit there is a distinction between a mattress unit and a bed system. Stacy defines a bed system as having a mattress (which is a support surface assembly) and a support frame assembly. See col. 5, lines 1-4. Accordingly, Stacy et al. understand that a self-contained mattress unit does not have components that are integrally associated with the support frame assembly or other structures.

The references cited by the examiner illustrate conventional bed designs that have inflatable bladders. For example, Stacy et al. has air conduits extending (a) from below the bottom side of the support plate assembly (see col. 5, lines 65 to 66) and (b) into inflatable bladders contained in a mattress. Stacy et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest making a self-contained mattress unit with different dispersion units in at least a head section of a self-contained mattress unit and at least a foot section of the self-contained mattress unit, as claimed. Instead, Stacy et al. disclose dispersion units being outside a mattress unit, which is contrary to the instant invention. In addition, Stacy et al. fails to disclose any control system positioned within a self-contained mattress unit, as claimed.

Newkirk et al. discloses that its pump is outside the mattress unit; see col. 3, lines 2 to 5; because the tubes from each inflatable bladder extend beyond the confines of the mattress unit; see figure 2, items 40 and 57. Moreover, Newkirk et al. fails to disclose, suggest or teach any self-contained mattress system, as claimed.

The other cited references were relied upon by the examiner for different purposes that the failings set forth above. Moreover, none of the cited references disclose the instant invention or any self-contained mattress unit as claimed. Accordingly, we will not address these references in this response.

In view of this response, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is now in condition for allowance and that such allowance is earnestly requested.

Date: 6/8/04

Respectfully submitted

By: 

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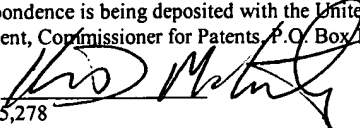


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Date 6/8/04 Kevin D. McCarthy 
Attorney Reg. No. 35,278

1. (Original) A stand alone integrated mattress comprising:
a self-contained mattress unit having at least a head section and a foot section, and capable of converting from a horizontal position or an inclined position to a chair-like conformation;
at least one inflatable bladder in each section of the self-contained mattress unit;
at least one fluid source;
at least one dispersion unit in each section and each dispersion unit provides a fluid, obtained from the fluid source, to a conduit which directs the fluid into the inflatable bladder positioned in the section of the dispersion unit;
a control system positioned in one of the sections and interconnected to each dispersion unit to control the dispersion of the fluid to the inflatable bladders in each section.
2. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 1 wherein the at least one fluid source is ambient air.
3. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 1 wherein the at least one fluid source is selected from the group consisting of a reservoir, ambient air and combinations thereof.
4. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 1 wherein the fluid is selected from the group consisting of air and an aqueous solution.
5. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 1 wherein the inflatable bladders are capable of vibrating, rotating, creating wave motions, providing not direct percussion, providing support, and combinations thereof to a user of the mattress.
6. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 1 wherein the control system has an input unit that allows an operator to input data to control at least the inflation and/or deflation of the inflatable bladders.
7. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 6 wherein the input unit is interconnected to the control unit as an integrated component thereof.
8. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 6 wherein the input unit is interconnected to the control unit by a tethered electrical connection.
9. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 6 wherein the input unit is interconnected to the control unit through an electrically connected hinge.
10. (Original) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 6 wherein the input unit has a SIMM daughter board that interconnects to the control unit.
11. (Amended) The stand alone integrated mattress of claim 6 wherein the input unit

transmits a remote ~~wireless signal~~ wireless signal to a receiver on the control unit.

12. (Original) A stand alone integrated mattress comprising:
a mattress unit having at least a head section and a foot section;
at least one inflatable bladder in each section of the self-contained mattress unit;
at least one fluid source;
at least one dispersion unit in the mattress and the dispersion unit provides a fluid,
obtained from the fluid source, to a conduit which directs the fluid into the inflatable bladder;
a control system positioned in one of the sections and interconnected to each dispersion
unit to control the dispersion of the fluid to the inflatable bladders
wherein the control system has an input unit that allows an operator to input data to
control at least the inflation and/or deflation of the inflatable bladders
wherein the input unit is selected from the group consisting of the input unit (1) is
interconnected to the control unit by a tethered electrical connection, (2) transmits a remote
signal to a receiver on the control unit, (3) has a SIMM daughter board that interconnects to the
control unit, or (4) is interconnected to the control unit through an electrically connected hinge.

13. (Original) The mattress of claim 12 wherein the mattress unit is a self-contained
capable of converting from a horizontal position or an inclined position to a chair-like
conformation;
wherein each section has at least one dispersion unit and each dispersion unit provides the
fluid, obtained from the fluid source, to the conduit which directs the fluid into the inflatable
bladder positioned in the section of the dispersion unit;
the control system positioned in one of the sections and interconnected to each dispersion
unit to control the dispersion of the fluid to the inflatable bladders in each section.

14. (Original) The mattress of claim 13 wherein at least one fluid source is ambient air.

15. (Original) The mattress of claim 13 wherein the at least one fluid source is selected
from the group consisting of a reservoir, ambient air and combinations thereof.

16. (Original) The mattress of claim 13 wherein the fluid is selected from the group
consisting of air and an aqueous solution.

17. (Original) The mattress of claim 13 wherein the inflatable bladders are capable of
vibrating, rotating, creating wave motions, providing percussion, providing support, and
combinations thereof to a user of the mattress.